INT. SYNAGOGUE – NAZARETH – DAY

The stone room is lit by narrow shafts of sunlight

cutting through small windows.

Dust floats

like slow-moving stars in the air.

The smell of oil lamps

and parchment lingers.

A row of men sit along the wall,

women and children gathered nearby.

The ḥazzan (חַזָּן, attendant)

calls a name:

HAZZAN

Yeshua ben Yosef (יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן־יוֹסֵף)

Heads turn.

A small boy rises

no older than ten.

His tunic hangs loose,

his sandals whisper on the floor.

His hair is a thick crown of curls,

catching the light.

He walks toward the reading stand

As his small hands touch

the edge of the wooden podium…

it happens.

The room around him

splits.

He sees the physical

the elders

the scroll,

the oil lamps.

But overlaying it

is the spirit realm.

Angels stand tall near the windows,

luminous,

eyes like burning bronze,

hands resting on hilts of unseen swords.

Demons

like ragged shadows

hover in the rafters,

their long fingers

brushing against certain men’s shoulders.

Whispers like cold wind pour from them.

Some people in the room glow faintly,

their hearts are pure and warm.

Others are shrouded,

their chests knotted with envy,

bitterness,

lust.

The Boy sees them all.

It’s loud in His spirit

the pounding of hearts,

the layered thoughts,

the angels’ steady prayers

the demons’ mocking laughter.

He blinks,

gripping the Torah

His hands are small against the ancient parchment.

The letters dance

on the surface for a moment before stilling.

He begins to read —

slowly,

Carefully.

As He speaks,

some angels incline their heads.

A few demons recoil,

Hissing.

The weight in the room shifts.

A man in the front row squints at Him

face is calm,

but Yeshua sees in his heart

a coiled snake of pride

a silent judgment from his heart:

“Who is this boy to read before us?”

Another man,

older,

has tears already in his eyes

The Boy sees his heart open like a well,

desperate for God

though he did not know

why the boy’s voice moved him so

The boy keeps reading.

His voice steadies.

The scroll is rolled closed.

He steps back,

bows slightly,

and returns to his seat.

From the outside,

it was just a child’s first reading.

From the inside,

it was a battlefield.